

Adoption Support Subsidy and Medical Subsidy in Michigan

Adoption Services Division

Michigan Department of Human Services

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Adoption support subsidy

- Nationally, 88 percent of children with “special needs” adopted in FY 2001 received an adoption subsidy.
- There is a positive correlation between the percentage of adopted children who receive subsidy and the percent of eligible children who are adopted.
- Federal law was written to provide support for families to adopt children who could not be adopted without assistance because of a variety of specific factors or conditions.

Adoption support subsidy

- Adoption support subsidy provides financial support to adoptive families to assist in the cost of care for an eligible adopted child.
- Parameters for IV-E eligibility are set by the federal government and include:
 - The child cannot or should not be returned home to his or her parents.
 - The child qualifies as having “special needs” that are set within broad parameters.
 - An attempt to place the child without adoption assistance was made and was unsuccessful except where it would be against the best interest of the child.
 - Each state defines the criteria for special needs within the broad federal guidelines

Michigan adoption support subsidy eligibility

In Michigan the eligibility requirements are:

- Child is under Michigan court jurisdiction as a result of neglect or abuse or the child is receiving SSI and cannot or should not be returned to the birth home
- The child meets at least **one of the following conditions:**
 - Is age 3 years or older (if the child is 3 no other conditions are needed)
 - Is SSI eligible (Supplemental Security Income).
 - Receives a foster care payment with DOC Level 2 or higher.
 - Is being adopted with a previously adopted sibling.
 - Is being adopted with a sibling who is eligible for support subsidy.
 - Is being adopted by a relative.
 - Has been in foster care for 2 years since termination of parental rights, and a family who can adopt without subsidy has not been₄ located.

Michigan adoption support subsidy rates

- Adoption support subsidy is based on the rate determined when the child is in foster care (or SSI).
- State and federal law requires that determination of eligibility be completed before the Petition for Adoption is filed with the court.
- Michigan sets the amount of the adoption support subsidy equal to the foster care payment at the time of the adoption. This is the highest rate allowed under Federal IV-E.
- Adoption support subsidy rates increase when foster care payments increase and when the child turns 13 years of age.
- Otherwise the rate remains at the level determined prior to adoption.

Adoption medical subsidy

Adoption medical subsidy is a “safety net” that provides coverage for physical, mental, or emotional conditions that existed, or the cause of which existed, before the petition for adoption was filed. This program is not mandated by federal law and is state and TANF funded.

Adoption medical subsidy

- The categories of services covered for mental or emotional conditions (within established policy limits) includes:
 - Outpatient counseling
 - In-home behavioral services
 - Temporary out of home placement
 - Placement outside the family home in a residential behavioral treatment facility.
- Adoption medical subsidy also covers:
 - Conditions requiring medical services
 - Special education services
 - Travel to obtain services over 30 miles from the home.
- All other types of public resources and third party payment must be used prior to adoption medical subsidy.

Growth in federal expenditures for adoption support subsidy

- Federal expenditures for adoption subsidy have grown more than 2,000 times in the last two decades, from less than \$400,000 in fiscal year 1981 to \$1.3 billion in fiscal year 2002, and are expected to approach \$2.5 billion by FY 2008.

Source: "Understanding Adoption Subsidies: An Analysis of AFCARS Data" January 2005. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

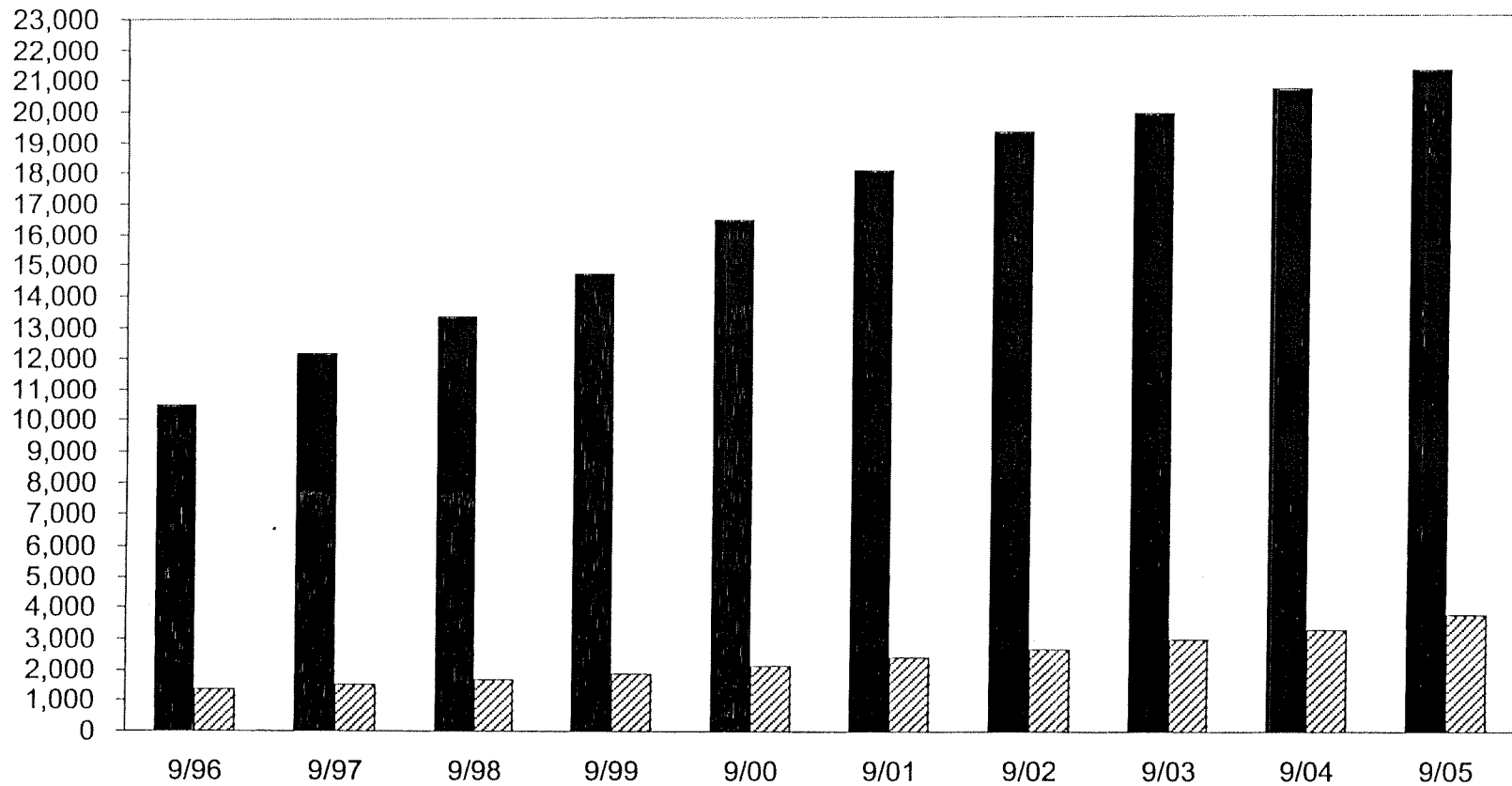
This growth is also occurring in Michigan

- Michigan expenditures for adoption support subsidy have grown by 162% in the last 10 years from \$80 million in 1996 to \$209 million in 2005.
- The number of adoption support subsidy cases has grown by 111% in ten years from 11,853 in 1996 to 25,029 in 2005.
- Over 90 percent of Michigan children adopted from the child welfare system in 2005 received adoption support subsidy.
- In the most recent study by the North American Council on Adoptable Children (2002), Michigan was rated as one of 26 states with good to outstanding adoption support subsidy programs.
- AFCARS data from 2001 places Michigan as 7th in median monthly adoption support subsidy amount by age (most recent data). Nationally the median monthly adoption support subsidy in 2001 was \$444 per month. In Michigan the median adoption support subsidy in 2001 was \$591.

ADOPTION SUBSIDY CASES

Point-In-Time Data

Number of Cases



 Federal	10,494	12,156	13,333	14,681	16,449	18,031	19,303	19,896	20,671	21,262
 State	1,359	1,534	1,679	1,873	2,146	2,401	2,681	3,019	3,313	3,767
Total	11,853	13,690	15,012	16,554	18,595	20,432	21,984	22,915	23,984	25,029

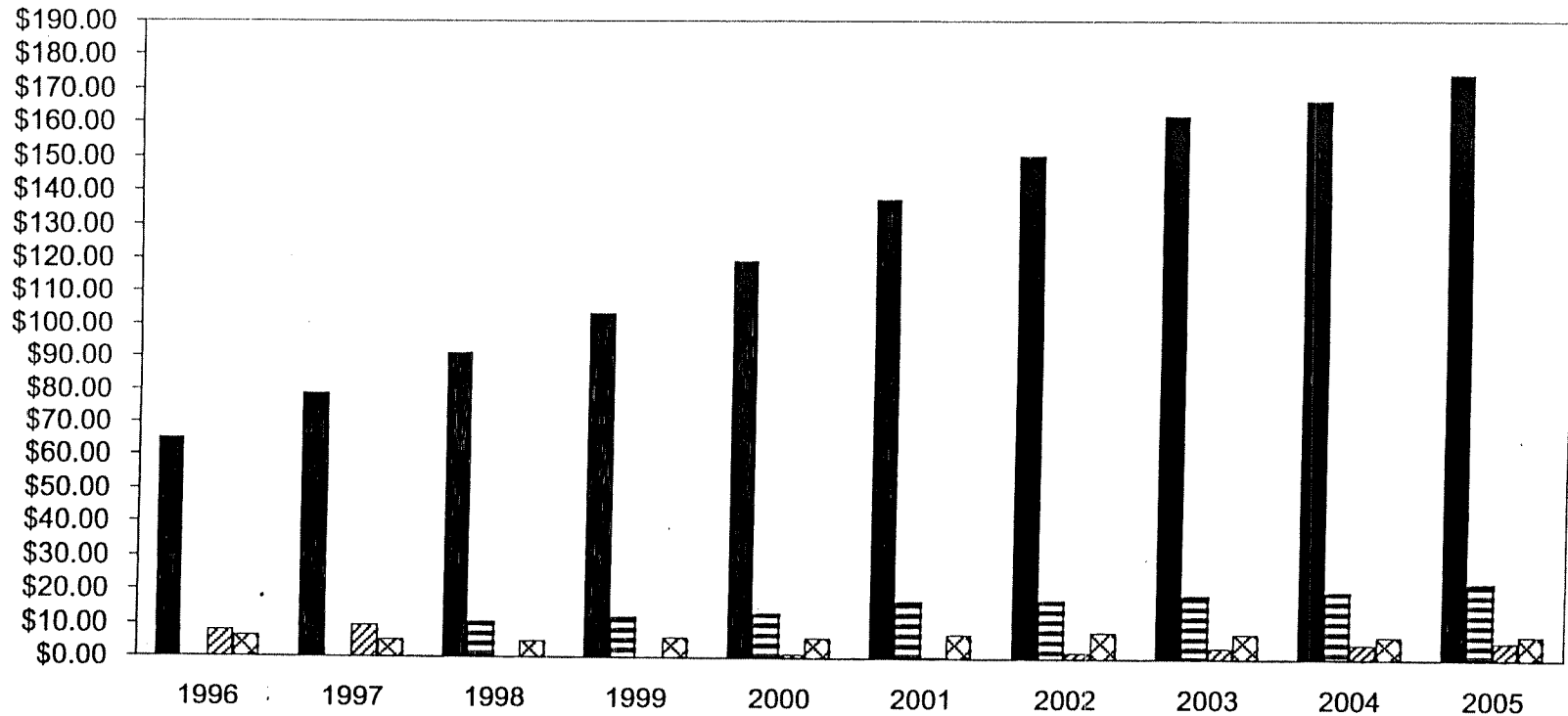
- The number of Adoption Subsidy cases increased by 111% from 9/96 to 9/05.
Beginning in FY 1998, state funded subsidy cases are funded by TANF funds and/or GF/GP.





[km]ms/Program Descrip 2007/59-adopcase.xls

ADOPTION SUBSIDY EXPENSES

By Program By Fiscal Year: 1996 - 2005

In Millions



 Title IVE	\$65.28	\$78.80	\$91.14	\$103.40	\$119.23	\$137.41	\$150.30	\$161.87	\$166.48	\$173.95
 TANF	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	17.02	17.41	18.95	19.89	22.87
 State Funds	8.10	9.39	0.00	0.00	1.30	0.25	1.99	3.51	4.59	5.22
 Medical	6.34	5.37	5.04	6.24	5.90	7.17	8.07	7.69	6.80	7.07
Total	\$79.72	\$93.56	\$96.18	\$109.64	\$126.43	\$161.85	\$177.77	\$192.02	\$197.76	\$209.11

- Adoption Subsidy expenses increased 162% from FY 1996 to FY 2005. The Title IVE Subsidy Program received 56.7% federal funds in FY 2005.

Note: Title IVE, TANF and state funds refer to the eligibility categories of children covered by the Adoption Support Subsidy Program. The Title IVE Subsidy Program received 56.71% federal funds in FY 2005. Effective October 1, 1997, State Support and Medical subsidy programs are funded by TANF and/or state funds.

Concepts to consider

- **Deferred Adoption Assistance**

- Defer adoption assistance until it is needed to meet the needs of the adopted child
- Eligibility:
 - Meet the definition of a high risk adoption but have no current disability.
 - Meet all the requirements for adoption support subsidy at the time of adoption but the parent(s) voluntarily agree to adopt without an adoption support subsidy until there is a condition that warrants support.
 - Parents can elect to sign the agreement with the payment level of \$0 - to be raised to meet the needs of the child if necessary at a future date.
- Michigan's adoption support subsidy payment could rise as much as 10% based on the number of children who currently do not qualify for adoption support subsidy.

Concepts to consider

- **Adoption support subsidy eligibility when a child has been in a foster home for over 6 months**
 - Allow adoption support subsidy eligibility if a child is placed in a foster home and parental rights are terminated after the child has been in care for six months or longer.
 - Allows for adoption support subsidy for healthy children under 3 years of age.
 - This would effectively make all children entering foster care eligible for subsidy.
 - Other states that include this type of eligibility qualification include: Arizona, Florida, Ohio, Oregon, S. Dakota and Wyoming.
 - Adoption support subsidy could increase by approximately 10%.

Concepts to consider

- **Extend adoption support subsidy to racial or ethnic minorities under age 3 without disabilities.**
 - Forty states and the District of Columbia identify some type of minority status in their special needs definitions.
 - This would allow for minority children under the age of three with no known disabilities to receive subsidy.

Additional Information

Adoption Assistance Programs

Michigan Department of Human Services

March 8, 2006

MICHIGAN'S ADOPTION SUPPORT SUBSIDY PROGRAM

Adoption subsidies are perhaps the single-most powerful tool by which the child welfare system can encourage adoption and support adoptive families. Nationally, 88 percent of children with "special needs" adopted in FY 2001 received an adoption subsidy. Analysis of state-level aggregate data shows a significant positive correlation between the percentage of adopted children who receive subsidy and the percent of eligible children who are adopted.

Federal expenditures for adoption subsidy expenditures have grown more than 2000 times in the last two decades, from less than \$400,000 in fiscal year 1981 to \$1.3 billion in fiscal year 2002, and are expected to approach \$2.5 billion by FY 2008.

("Understanding Adoption Subsidies: An Analysis of AFCARS Data" January 2005. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)

The Michigan Adoption Support Subsidy Program provides monthly financial support to assist families with the costs of care of an eligible adopted child. The program is intended to remove financial barriers to adoption of Michigan children who meet the "special needs" criteria as defined by policy and state law. Because this program is an incentive for adoption, state law and policy requires that a determination of eligibility be completed before the Petition for Adoption is filed with the court.

The majority of support subsidy cases are based on the rate determined when the child was in foster care. Some subsidy case rates are based on SSI payment amounts that were received prior to adoption or on the FIP payments.

FY 2006 Support Subsidy Rates (cases based on foster care payments)

Ages 0-12

Determination of Care Levels

<u>Standard rate</u>	<u>Level 1</u>	<u>Level 2</u>	<u>Level 3</u>
\$14.83/day	\$19.83/day	\$24.83/day	\$29.83/day
\$451.13/month	\$603.23/month	\$755.33/month	\$907.43/month
\$5,413/year	\$7,237/year	\$9,063/yr	\$10,888/yr

Ages 13-18

<u>Standard rate</u>	<u>Level 1</u>	<u>Level 2</u>	<u>Level 3</u>
\$18.26/day	\$24.26/day	\$29.26/day	\$34.26/day
\$555.47/month	\$737.99/month	\$890.09/month	\$1042.19/month
\$6665/year	\$8,855/year	\$10,679/yr.	\$12,505/year

There is a higher rate if the child or youth is considered medically fragile

Michigan expenditures for adoption subsidy have grown by 162% in the last 10 years from \$80 million in 1996 to \$209 million in 2005. In 2005 Michigan received 55.9% federal matching funds for Title IVE eligible children. This means that for every dollar expended in FY 2005 for Title IVE funded adoption support subsidy the state was responsible for forty-four cents.

The number of adoption subsidy cases has grown by 111% in ten years from 11,853 in 1996 to 25,029 in 2005. Eighty-five percent of the subsidy cases are eligible for federal funding while fifteen percent are through TANF and/or state funds.

- In 2005 90.5 % of children adopted from the child welfare system received adoption subsidy in Michigan.
- Michigan was rated as one of 26 states with good to outstanding subsidy programs by the North American Council on Adoptable Children in 2002
- AFCARS data from 2001 places Michigan as 7th in median monthly adoption subsidy amount by age (most recent data). Nationally the median monthly adoption subsidy in 2001 was \$444 per month. In Michigan the median subsidy in 2001 was \$591.

SUPPORT SUBSIDY DURATION

The Adoption Support Subsidy continues until age 18, unless the child becomes ineligible. Some reasons for ineligibility include: the parent is no longer caring for the child, the child marries, or the child enters the military.

Extensions for 18 year olds, still completing high school

Each year, the legislature appropriates funds for the Adoption Support Subsidy Program. If sufficient funds are appropriated for extensions to the subsidy program, extension agreements may be entered for children who have reached age 18 but are still attending high school full-time and progressing toward high school completion. This fiscal year, extensions are available until the child reaches 19 years old.

FUNDING SOURCES

Federal Title IV-E	\$173.95 million
State Funds	\$5.22 million
Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Block Grant (TANF)	\$22.87 million

ADOPTION MEDICAL SUPPORT SUBSIDY PROGRAM

STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

- Established in Michigan Social Welfare Act under MCL 400.15h
- This program is not required by federal law and is intended to serve as a safety net for parents who adopt children with preexisting conditions.

ELIGIBILITY

A child (under age 18) may be eligible for Michigan's Adoption Medical Subsidy Program if:

- He/she was in Michigan foster care at the time the Petition for Adoption was filed,

OR

- For children adopted before June 28, 1992, the child's adoption was finalized in Michigan court.

AND

- The child has an identified physical, mental, or emotional condition that existed, or the cause of which existed, before the Petition for Adoption was filed.

Applications for Medical Subsidy are accepted either before or after the adoption. This allows adoptive parents to add conditions caused prior to adoption that were not apparent or were undiagnosed.

Once approved, DHS enters into a contractual agreement with adoptive families that specifies:

- The physical, mental, or emotional condition that has been certified
- A requirement that other available public resources and third party payment is used before payment is made (e.g. private insurance, Medicaid, special education services available through public schools, etc.)
- Note: that more than 20,000 children enrolled in our Adoption Support Subsidy program receive Medicaid coverage as part of that benefit package.

CATEGORIES OF SERVICES COVERED (within established policy limits)

1. Mental or emotional condition(s)

- Outpatient counseling - FY 2005 expenditures were \$1.9 million.
- In home behavioral (aid) service - FY 2005 expenditures were \$250,000.
- Temporary Out of Home Placement - FY 2005 expenditures were \$33,000.
- Placement outside the Family Home in a residential behavioral treatment facility:
FY 2005 expenditures were \$3.571 million for approximately 100 children
 - Covers placement in licensed child treatment facilities.
 - Parents must be willing to utilize their support subsidy and to apply for SSI to help defray the costs of placement.

2. Conditions requiring special education services - FY 2005 expenditures were \$149,000.

3. Conditions requiring medical services - FY 2005 expenditures were \$1.1 million.

4. Travel - FY 2005 expenditures were \$39,169.

REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS

- Parents obtain prior approval when required.
- Parents or providers submit invoices for service provided.
- Parents or providers provide documentation that other resources have been utilized (e.g. documentation from private insurance).
- Approximately 12,000 payments are processed each year with a turn around time of 4-6 weeks.

FUNDING SOURCE

TANF, State funds

EXPENDITURES

FY 2003: \$7.3 million

FY 2004: \$6.7 million

FY 2005: \$7.0 million

In an effort to insure that the adoption contracts and subsidy programs are inline with national outcome based best practice policy, consultants from the National Resource Center on Adoption began working with us in December. There is a two day review of the adoption subsidy program scheduled with three consultants in April. This process will help to insure that the program is meeting the best interest of the children served while remaining fiscally responsible.

ADOPTION SUPPORT SUBSIDY PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY CHART

In 1980, the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act, Public Law (P.L.) 96272, amended the Social Security Act and established a program of adoption assistance for "children with special needs." See 1980 U.S. Code Cong. and Adm. News, at 1448,1450. This legislation was intended to provide, for the first time, federal financial participation with states in a program of incentives and support for families **to adopt certain children who could not be adopted without assistance because of a variety of specific factors or conditions**. Federal Financial Participation (FFP) is available in the Title IV-E adoption assistance program for both ongoing adoption assistance payments and reimbursement for the nonrecurring expenses of adoption as well as medical assistance for the adopted child. The Act is now known as Title IV-E, the Federal Adoption Assistance Program, and is codified at 42 U.S.C. §673.

Eligibility for Federal IV-E Adoption Assistance is based on the definition of "Special Needs" and the child's eligibility for the funding through "need-based" programs.

Federal Law:

SPECIAL NEEDS DETERMINATION

The child must be determined to have "special needs" which includes **all three requirements** listed below.

1. The state has determined that the child cannot or should not be returned home to his or her parent(s).

Eligibility for Adoption Subsidy in Michigan is based on "Special Needs" first, then a determination of whether the child meets the eligibility for Title IV-E funding is determined. If a child is not eligible for Title IV-E funding, the subsidy is paid through state or TANF funding.

Michigan's Law and Policy as written to comply with federal law:

SPECIAL NEEDS DETERMINATION

The child must be determined to have "special needs" which includes:

1. The child is under the Michigan court jurisdiction as a result of neglect or abuse or the child is receiving SSI due to a disabling condition - and a Michigan court has found that the child cannot or should not be returned to their parent.

AND

2. The child has a “factor or condition” (uniquely defined by each state) that qualifies him or her as having “special needs.” Depending on the state, this factor or condition may include:

- Ethnic background
- Age
- Membership in a sibling group
- Medical, physical, or emotional condition or handicap

The factor or condition must prompt the conclusion that the child cannot be placed without providing adoption assistance or medical assistance.

AND

3. An attempt to place the child without adoption assistance was made but was unsuccessful except where it would be against the best interest of the child.

Need-based requirement

The child must meet **any of the four eligibility requirements** provided by law.

1. The child was eligible for AFDC during the month in which court proceedings were initiated or was eligible

AND

2. The child meets at least **one of the following conditions:**

- Is age 3 years or older (if the child is 3 no other conditions are needed).
- Is Supplemental Security Income (SSI) eligible.
- Receives a foster care payment with DOC Level 2 or higher.
- Is being adopted with a previously adopted sibling.
- Is being adopted with a sibling who is eligible for support subsidy.
- Is being adopted by a relative.
- Has been in foster care for 2 years since termination of parental rights, and a family who can adopt without subsidy has not been located

AND

3. The state verifies that the child cannot be adopted without adoption assistance by the adoptive parent’s signature on the Adoption Support Subsidy Intent Statement (DHS 4081).

IV-E Funding Determination

This is a determination of the child’s eligibility for Title IV-E matching funds. If the child does not qualify, the subsidy will be funded by state funds or TANF funds.

Michigan follows the federal requirements to determine IV-E eligibility.

within 6 months prior to that time and remained eligible until adoption placement.

OR

2. The child was eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) programs under the Social Security Act before adoption.

OR

3. The child's parent was in foster care and receiving Title IV-E funds that covered both the parent and child when the adoption was initiated.

OR

4. The child previously received IV-E funded adoption assistance, and his or her adoptive parent died or the adoption was dissolved.

AND

A signed agreement:

The Adoption Subsidy Agreement must be signed by the parent(s) and the state prior to finalization of the adoption.

The child must have "special needs" and be a minority child, part of a sibling group being adopted together, age 3 years or older, or have a documented medical or mental health condition.

AND

A signed agreement:

The Adoption Subsidy Agreement must be signed by the parent(s) and the state prior to finalization of the adoption.

VERIFICATION OF INFORMATION PROVIDED TO ADOPTIVE PARENT(S)

Adoption Services Division
Michigan Family Independence Agency

Adoptee/Child		
Adoptee/Parent(s)		
Address		
City	State	Zip

ADOPTION WORKER

The following information/documents have been provided to the adoptive parent(s):

- ☐ 1) The adoptee's nonidentifying information as described in the Probate Code (MCL 710.27(1)(2).
- ☐ 2) The petition(s) that resulted in each placement of the child.
- ☐ 3) All Initial Service Plans and Updated Service Plans concerning the child while in foster care, adoptive placement, etc.

The following information has been reviewed and discussed with the adoptive parent(s)

- ☐ A) The information listed above in Items #1, 2 and 3 have been reviewed and discussed with the adoptive parent(s).
- ☐ B) All medical and psychological information known by or available to the adoption agency regarding the adoptee.
- ☐ C) A list of the adoptee's medical and psychological needs, known by or available to the adoption agency and provided to the adoptive parent(s).

ADOPTIVE PARENT(S)

I (we) hereby affirm that I (we) have received all of the information listed above in Items 1, 2, and 3 and that I attended a conference on _____ with the adoption agency regarding the information listed in Items A, B, and C as listed above.

Adoptive Parent Signature	Date
Adoptive Parent Signature	Date
Adoption Worker Signature	Date
Adoption Agency	

Check All That Apply

- ☐ A copy of this document was provided to the adoptive parent(s)
- ☐ A copy of this document was placed in the adoptive family file
- ☐ A copy of this document was placed in the adoptee's case file

AUTHORITY: State P.A. 495 of 1998

RESPONSE: Use of FIA-4818 is voluntary. Information may be provided on an alternative form.

PENALTY: None

The Family Independence Agency will not discriminate against any individual or group because of race, sex, religion, age, national origin, color, height, weight, marital status, political beliefs or disability. If you need help with reading, writing, hearing, etc., under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are invited to make your needs known to an FIA office in your county.

TIME FRAME

Within 45 days of the commitment date for a state ward or acceptance date for a permanent court ward for a child whose plan is adoption, the adoption worker must complete a written assessment of the child for adoption.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the child's adoption assessment is to provide an accurate and comprehensive description of the child, including the child's special needs and history, for the following uses:

- As a tool for matching a child who is available for adoption with a family whose abilities to parent are well suited to the child's needs and characteristics.
- To provide the child with a reliable source of history and information about himself/herself,
- To help the adoption worker identify the steps to be completed in order to identify an adoptive family for the child.

The assessment must be complete enough to achieve these purposes without reference to other documents, and therefore should summarize all **reasonably obtainable information** available at the time the assessment is completed. This includes medical, emotional, developmental, and educational information about the child as well as historical information about the child and the biological family. Factors listed in the best interest section of the Child Adoption Assessment are an important guide in achieving a successful placement.

Information required in the Child Assessment that is not reasonably available within the required time frame for the completion of the Child Assessment is to be included in an Addendum to the assessment, prior to adoptive placement.

The Child Assessment consists of two sections containing information about the child. The purpose for creating these two sections is to facilitate the release of information at a future date. The first section contains identifying information about the child, the family of origin, and the child's placement history. An adoption agency responsible for adoption planning for a child is required by state law (MCL 710.27) to compile and preserve this identifying information if it is reasonably obtainable.

The second section contains non-identifying information about the child. Information (including first names) which could reveal the identity of the child's birth family or foster families who have cared for the child **must not be disclosed**. This section must also contain a description of the physical and emotional needs, interests

and abilities to be considered in making decisions about an adoptive placement.

FIA and private agencies must use the following formats for each section. Sections may be supplemented with additional information as desired.

CHILD ADOPTION ASSESSMENT FORMAT

Identifying Information

NOT TO BE RELEASED

Name
Date of Birth
Social Security Number
Permanent Custody Date/County
Date Referred for Adoption
Court File Number
Worker
FIA Case Number
Recipient ID Number
Report Date

BIRTH FAMILY INFORMATION (if known)

Birth Mother

Name (include maiden name)
Date of Birth
Social Security Number
Last Known Address

Birth Father

Name
Date of Birth
Social Security Number
Last Known Address

Siblings

Name/Date of Birth
Social Security Number
Legal Status
Name of Person Living With / Relationship (identify foster home)
Last Known Address

PLACEMENT HISTORY

Date of Placement
Name / Address
Type of Placement

DATES OF CONTACT Include dates of contact, with whom, role/position, and type (i.e. home call, telephone, office)

PROGRESS TOWARD ADOPTION This section should identify the specific action steps, which must be addressed in order to place the child in an adoptive home. The worker should include a description of activities to be completed during the next quarterly report period.

Recruitment Activities (if necessary)

Progress Toward Adoption

Barriers to Adoption/Action Steps to Overcome Barriers

Projected Date for Adoption

Non-Identifying
Information

**THIS MATERIAL
MUST BE SHARED
(TEMPLATE ONLY/
HIDDEN TEXT)**

Child's First Name

Date/Time of Birth

Place of Birth

City, County, State

Gender

Is Ward a Member or Eligible for Membership in a Tribe? [] Yes [] No
Eligibility Determination Pending [] (See CFF 742)

EVENTS LEADING TO PERMANENT WARDSHIP The description should provide the reader with a concise, informative summary. A complete restatement of all legal proceedings is NOT required.

BIRTH PARENT'S HISTORY Summarize for each parent their educational level, employment history, health issues, and special interests (including hobbies, athletic or artistic activities), or achievements. Provide a complete physical description. NOTE: identifying information about the parents (including first names) is not to be included in this section.

CHILD'S HISTORY Describe the child's life experiences, e.g., relationships, types of discipline, traumatic experiences, etc. that would aid in selecting an appropriate adoptive family.

PLACEMENT HISTORY Summarize the number and types of placements. Indicate reasons for replacement, if known. Do not include identifying information.

CHILD'S CURRENT LEVEL OF PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, AND EDUCATIONAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL FUNCTIONING Write a narrative description of the following factors that apply:

- a complete physical description including height, weight, hair and eye color, birth marks, glasses, etc.
- any hobbies, talents, special interests, and participation in school activities
- the current physical, emotional, medical, social, developmental, and educational needs and projected future needs
- the child's sense of self, family, and community
- the child's racial, ethnic, and cultural identity
- the child's religious preference and involvement with a church community
- the child's significant emotional attachments with family, foster care provider, community, etc.
- the basis for a DOC rate, if applicable
- any relevant information / observations about behavior and personal characteristics.

CURRENT IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIPS AND ATTACHMENTS

Describe the child's relationships with kinship caregivers, foster parents, birth parents, and other significant individuals. Describe the child's perceptions of these relationships. Describe caregiver's interest in adoption.

CHILD'S ATTITUDE, PREPARATION, AND READINESS FOR ADOPTION

Describe:

- the child's readiness and preparation for adoption
- factors that must be in place to assist the child in developing the capacity to trust new parent(s)
- factors that will need to be addressed to achieve a successful placement
- the child's feelings about an adoptive placement
- the child's capacity to transition to a new family, community, school, etc., if necessary.

INFORMATION ABOUT ALL KNOWN SIBLINGS (first name only)

- Frequency of contact/visitation among siblings
- Describe the relationship between siblings, if none why?
- Describe any skills, talents and temperament of siblings
- Are the siblings available for adoption? What is the permanency plan?
- Explain why siblings are separated and plans to reunite, if appropriate.

BEST INTERESTS CRITERIA

Special Physical, Emotional, and Educational Needs. Describe any significant factors or characteristics about the child, which are important to consider for the child's well being.

Placement with or without Siblings. Siblings shall be placed together whenever possible. If placement with siblings is not possible, or not considered in the child's best interests, document the reasons. Address the need for continued sibling contact following adoption.

Placement with Relatives. Describe any relatives with whom the child has a significant emotional relationship and the importance of maintaining this relationship following adoption.

Maintaining Continuity of Current Relationships. Describe the importance of maintaining emotional ties between the child and current caregivers, friends, teachers, and other significant persons in the child's life.

Religious Preference. Describe the role religion has played in the child's life and any individual or specific needs or interests of the child.

Child's Wishes Regarding Adoption and Characteristics of Potential Adoptive Family. Describe the child's feelings about being adopted and, if a family has been identified, about the specific adoptive placement. A child who is 14 years of age or older must give consent to their own adoption.

Other Factors Specific to this child.

See CFA 732-30 MEPA/IEAP for consideration of race.